

Mentor/Protégé Program

The 8(a) Business Development (BD) Mentor-Protégé Program is designed to enable successful firms to provide various forms of business development assistance to 8(a) BD Program Participants.

Goal of the Mentor-Protégé Program

The purpose of the 8(a) BD Mentor-Protégé relationship is to:



Enhance the capabilities of the an 8(a) BD Program Participant (i.e. the protégé firm) by pairing it with an experienced, successful firm (i.e. the mentor)



Assist the protégé firm with meeting the goals established in its SBA-approved business plan



Improve the protégé firm's ability to successfully compete for contracts

Why should small business owners join the Mentor-Protégé Program?

Technical and management assistance

Protégé firms gain access to the mentor's expertise, resources, and capabilities

Contracting

Mentors can provide assistance relevant to performance of non-8(a) contracts so that protégé firms more fully develop their competitive capabilities. Mentors can enter into joint-venture arrangements with protégés to compete for, and perform on, certain federal government contracts.

Financial assistance in the form of equity and/or loans

Mentors can own up to 40% of the protégé business to help it raise capital.

Who is eligible to enter the Mentor-Protégé Program?

Mentor

A mentor can be any of the following:

- Graduated 8(a) firm
- Current 8(a) firm in the transitional stage
- A small business
- A large business
- A non-profit entity

A mentor entity must:

- Demonstrate a commitment and ability to assist developing an 8(a) BD Program Participant
- Make a commitment to assist its protégé for at least one year.
- Demonstrate ALL of the following:
 - » Possess a favorable financial health
 - » Possess good character
 - » Federal contractor in good standing
 - » Can provide valuable assistance to a protégé through lessons learned and/or practical experience gained

Protégé Firm

Pro Tip: 8(a) firms should consult with their SBA District Office Business Opportunity Specialist BEFORE they apply for the Mentor-Protégé Program

Protégé firms must:

- Participate in the 8(a) BD Program
- Meet one of the following conditions
 - » Be in development stage of 8(a) BD Program
 - » Have never received an 8(a) contract
 - » Be less than half the size of the small business size standard corresponding to its primary NAICS code
- Be in good standing with SBA program requirements and current with all SBA reporting requirements
- Pro Tip: Generally, protégés may only have one mentor at a time, but SBA can authorize a second mentor after review.

Pro Tip: Generally, protégés may have only one mentor at a time and vice versa, but SBA can authorize an additional mentor or protégé after review.

What is the process for joining the Mentor-Protégé program?

1. The proposed Mentor and Protégé pairing draft and submit a written agreement to SBA
2. SBA reviews the agreement and determines if it will meet both parties' needs
3. The written agreement must:
 - Address how the Mentor's assistance will help the protégé firm meet the goals in its business plan.
 - Establish a single point of contact in the mentor firm responsible for management the agreement
 - Provide assistance for at least one year.
4. If approved, the relationship can begin immediately, with ongoing annual reviews from SBA to determine success of the relationship.

Pro Tip: If a firm doesn't qualify for the Mentor-Protégé program, the SBA offers a number of other training and educational programs, advisory services, publications, and contract assistance.